

CLASSICS & CHROME CONSIDERS MOVE TO BELOIT

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BELOIT - The City of Beloit could see an additional auto show bolster its ranks, with preliminary discussions between organizers of Classics & Chrome and the city yielding encouraging results. □

The long-running auto show is typically hosted the first weekend in May at the Machesney Park Mall complex. Show organizers approached the Beloit City Council Tuesday in hopes of furthering discussions about possibly holding the event in Beloit.

Classics & Chrome Co-Chairman Darrel Burnett stressed the talks were in the early stages, but welcomed the council's response to the possible relocation of the show.

Burnett said the auto show is being courted by municipalities in the Chicago suburbs, with Burnett noting he would like to keep the event in the Stateline Area if possible.

"We would like to find a community that would embrace what we are trying to do," Burnett said.

Burnett said the key would be finding adequate space in Beloit. The show requires about 65,000 square-feet of space. Beloit's proximity to Interstate 39/90 and Interstate 43 and revitalized downtown business corridor could play into the city's favor, officials speculated.

No specific location in Beloit has been targeted, with city staff noting the city would "review (the show's) requirements to determine if there are any solutions for the group in Beloit," said Director of Strategic Communications Sarah Millard.

Classics & Chrome has hosted auto shows for the last 18 years, drawing tens of thousands of visitors and classic car enthusiasts to the area. Burnett said a future relocation would potentially take place in 2019 and include additional partnerships with local businesses and possibly include a concert component.

"Again, it's all preliminary, but it's encouraging that the civic leaders see the value in a cooperative effort," Burnett said.

City Council President Kevin Leavy said the relocation of the show would be "an opportunity to showcase Beloit."

"I think it's something we need to look into and it will be interesting to see what could come from this," Leavy said.

Burnett said he will meet with Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation and city officials to discuss the matter further. In future, he said the show would not look to compete with Beloit Autorama, which is held each year in Preservation Park in the Town of Beloit.

Beloit Autorama Event Advisor Joe Chamberlain said the potential relocation wouldn't interfere with Autorama, which is typically held the third weekend in September.

"I can't see any conflict if (Classics & Chrome) followed their schedule," Chamberlain said.

Classics & Chrome will roar into the Machesney Park Mall, 8750 N. Second St., May 5 and 6. For more on the classic car show, visit classicsandchrome.com.